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Exegetical Notes.

John 4: 43-54.— Vs. 44, “In his own country.” This is a strange reason for coming into his own country, that he has no honor there. It may mean that he came there fresh from the scene of his miracles in Jerusalem, to receive the honor which had before been denied him, but which the miracles alone would bring him. It is ambiguous, if that is the meaning, but it is nearer an explanation than any I have ever seen.—Vs. 48, “Except you see signs and wonders.” This is the besetting evil of Jesus’ life, that men would not accept him except as a miracle worker. The kind of evidence that the miracle presented and the thing that it did were both acceptable to unspiritual men. But Jesus as a curer of men’s souls by the power of his life and teaching was unacceptable on both grounds. Sermon topic: The craving for wonders an obstacle to spiritual work.

John 5: 17-27.— Vs. 17, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Revised Version: “Worketh even until now.” The ground of the sabbath law is that God’s work came to an end, or at least suffered suspension. Jesus affirms that the divine activity is ceaseless, and claims, therefore, the like liberty for his work.— Vs. 18, “His own Father.” This charge is based on the “my Father” used by Jesus, which expresses a peculiar relation to God, while the usual expression “our Father” denotes a relation shared with other men. “Equal to God.” The equality with God is owing to the inheritance of the divine nature, which is implied in calling God “his own Father.” Men are supposed to be sons of God in a figurative sense only, which does not carry the hereditary principle with it. But descent from God involves divinity, as descent from man involves humanity.— Vs. 19, “The Son can do nothing of himself, except he see the Father doing something.” Literal translation. This is an expression in vivid language of the community of action between the Father and the Son. He does not continue their question of the community of nature, but has his own statement of the community of action. The relation is such that he could do nothing different from God. If God works, he works; if God rests, he rests.— Vs. 20, “Shows him all things which

he himself does." This statement of community of action has started in on the moral side; but it goes on to show how the Son's action is divine in its power also. God has in himself a creative power of life, and he communicates this to the Son, so that he bestows both spiritual life here and the resurrection life hereafter, and performs the necessary acts of judgment in determining the proper subjects of eternal life.

Sermon topics: Innumerable. Among them, Jesus' relation to God and man involved in his sonship; how man may cultivate community of action between himself and God; how man may acquire the power to impart life.

John 6: 1-14.—Vs. 2, "Because they saw the signs which he did." Notice how this book recurs to this statement of motive, and how Jesus deprecates it (2: 12, 23, 24; 3: 2; 4: 43-45, 48). On the other hand, Jesus himself constantly points to his works as proof that the Father sent him. This means that it is the general divine quality of these works, and not the mere element of wonder in them, that makes them real signs. Sermon topic: It is Jesus' love, not his power, that shows him to be from God.—Vs. 6, "Two hundred pennies' worth." Should be "shillings' worth," and the shilling at the time was a day's wages.

John 7: 14, 28-37.—Vs. 28. The meaning is, "You know my earthly origin (6: 42), but not my heavenly origin." "He who sent me is *true*." Should be "is real," a real being, not a product of his imagination. Jesus' proof of his Messianic claim is that he is not self-appointed, but commissioned by God, and that the proof of this is to be found everywhere in the divine quality of his works, which are not his own, but proceed from God. "Let him come to me and drink." This is another of the great refrains of this book—Jesus the bread of life, the water of life, the light of life, the life. Does a man want anything that belongs to the real life, the life of the spirit, the life in God, he can find it in Christ, the Son of God.

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Matthew 6: 2, 5, 16.—"Verily I say unto you they have their reward." In these words we see the difference between Christ's way of warning men and that of most earnest preachers.

He says: These hypocritical Pharisees are gaining that at which

they aim, the reputation for superior sanctity, and this success should be a warning to those who are tempted to follow their example.

When the matter is thus presented to our minds, we see at once that success in an evil course is far more mischievous than failure, and that the fear of succeeding in wrong is a worthy and potent safeguard to a tempted soul.

Matthew 11 : 16-19.—Here is a parable founded upon a children's game, a charade or pantomime. The contemporaries of Jesus are described as acting the part of a band of music before John, and that of funereal musicians before Jesus, and striving to persuade first one and then the other to respond in a way appropriate to the game. The construction of the parable plainly shows that the actors are not John and Jesus, as many interpret, but their critics. Jesus' application, in the last sentence, enforces the lesson that conscientious asceticism and conscientious freedom are alike acceptable to God and beneficial to men.

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Matthew 1 : 6.—"Of her *that had been the wife* of Uriah." The words in italics are legitimate, supplied to fill out the meaning of the Greek phrase "of her of Uriah," in view of the history in 2 Sam., chaps. 11 and 12. In two other instances Matthew suggests the taint of sin in the line of the Messianic descent: Matthew 1 : 3, Tamar deceived Judah (Gen. 38 : 12 f.), and, 2 : 5, Rahab, "the harlot" (Josh., chap. 2). It may not be fanciful that these suggestions, on the feminine side, may carry a reference to the human imperfections involved in birth from Mary; since the writer makes plain the immaculate conception, *i. e.*, perfection on the paternal side; see vss. 18, 20, 25.

The sinlessness of Jesus, however, is plainly taught in all four gospels, *e. g.*, (1) the temptation, Matt. 4 : 1-11; 26 : 38, 39; etc.; (2) the profession of Jesus, John 8 : 46; (3) the testimony of men, John 7 : 46; 2 Cor. 5 : 21; 1 Peter 2 : 22; etc.; (4) the general effect of his life.

Hence, the text suggests: (1) divine possibilities in the midst of human imperfections; (2) the triumph of spirit over heredity and environment.

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